



# PSC NEWS

## Missouri Public Service Commission

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### **PSC ISSUES EMERGENCY RULE ON CALLER ID BLOCKING SERVICE**

Jefferson City (September 26, 2003)---Citing a need to protect the health, safety and welfare of Missourians, the Missouri Public Service Commission has issued an emergency rule which establishes uniform standards and procedures to be followed by all telecommunications companies in Missouri in providing a caller identification (Caller ID) blocking service.

"Although telecommunications companies in Missouri currently provide identification blocking services to prevent the telephone number and identity of a caller from being displayed on the telephone of the called party," stated PSC General Counsel Dan Joyce, "procedures allowing identification blocking for domestic violence shelters and law enforcement agencies are not uniform throughout the state. In addition, the Commission recently received information from representatives of domestic violence shelters that some calls from shelters are not being blocked as intended."

Identification blocking services are designed to prevent the telephone number and identity of a caller from being displayed on the telephone of the called party. "When these sensitive calls placed by law enforcement agencies or domestic violence intervention agencies to people in distress or in need of emergency assistance are not blocked as intended," Joyce added, "the identity of the caller is unintentionally revealed to any person who has access to the called party's telephone. This may create a danger to the safety of the called parties in such circumstances, and can impede the efforts of law enforcement agencies and domestic violence agencies."

#### **Under the emergency rule:**

1) all telecommunications companies shall provide per-line blocking for federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies and private, nonprofit, tax-exempt domestic violence intervention agencies, and the employees of these agencies who have a need for such blocking pursuant to their employment. A telecommunications company shall enable per-line blocking within a reasonable time after a request from such an agency. A telecommunications company may determine whether the request has been made by a law enforcement or domestic violence intervention agency.

2) no telecommunications company shall charge any fee for per-line caller identification blocking for authorized federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies and private, nonprofit, tax-exempt domestic violence intervention agencies, and the employees of these agencies who have a need for such blocking pursuant to their employment.

"Providing caller identification blocking service for law enforcement and domestic violence shelters has been a policy of the Missouri Public Service Commission since 1993," stated Dan Joyce. "This emergency rule process begins an effort to take that policy and make it a rule all telecommunications companies must adhere to uniformly around the state."

The emergency rule was filed today with the Secretary of State with an effective date of October 6, 2003. The emergency rule will remain in effect until April 3, 2004. It is anticipated a permanent rule will replace the emergency rule in April.